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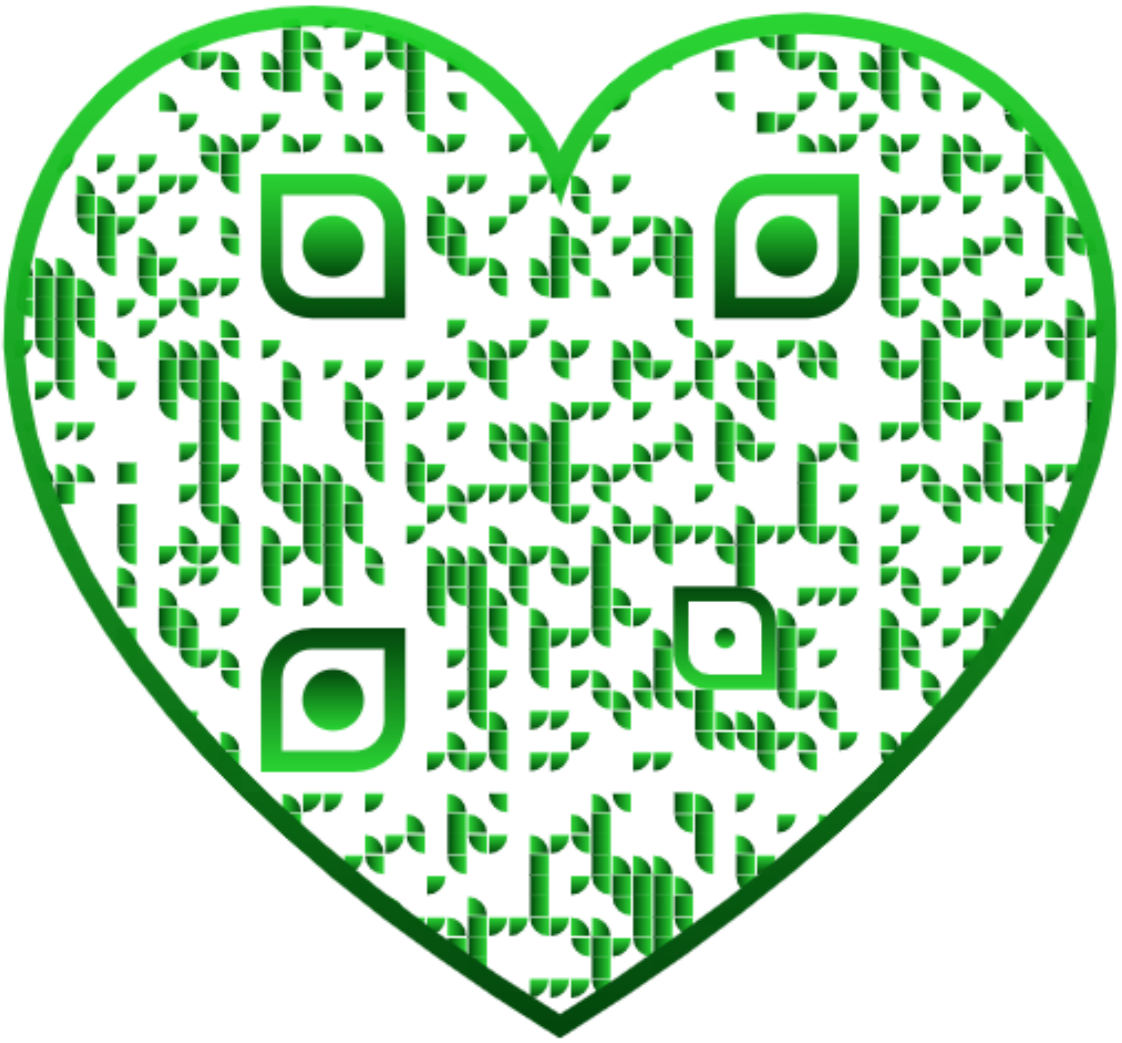
VENEER & alternatives

EXPERTS DISCUSS THE DELIGHTS AND PRACTICALITIES OF THE MANY FINISH OPTIONS FOR HARD SURFACES

PAINT TRENDS
Bolder exterior designs are trending, but there are limitations to bear in mind

FLEXJET COMPETITION
The contest is underway to design the fractional provider's next interior – so what's the brief?

GALLEY TECH
The latest galley equipment developments from the industry's specialist suppliers



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MOVING ON?
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Cover image: The new Pilatus PC-24 partial cabin mockup, showcasing materials including wood veneer finished in F/List's F/Lab Natural Oil

2024 IN REVIEW

Have you ever looked through these pages at all the gorgeous aircraft interiors, and wondered if you could turn your hand to designing one? Well now's your chance! Fractional provider Flexjet is running a public competition to design its next aircraft interior. In the feature on page 24, chairman Kenn Ricci outlines what he's looking for, highlights notable past projects (including a collaboration with Bentley), and explains why design matters so much to the firm. The competition runs until 23:59ET on 28 February 2025.

As I write this, 2024 is drawing to a close, and it's time to take stock of the year's key events. Airframe developments have included Textron Aviation unveiling its next-generation Cessna Citation lineup (the Cessna Citation M2 Gen3, CJ3 Gen3 and CJ4 Gen3); and the Gulfstream G700 gaining FAA and EASA type certifications. Notable outfitting projects include the second ACJ TwoTwenty by Comlux Completion; and a Bombardier Global 6000 refurbished with a lovely Winch Design interior. Plenty of other new design reveals come to mind too: the first interiors for Jekta's PHA-ZE 100, unveiled with design firm MBVision; two hydrogen-powered business jet designs from Sirius Aviation, developed with BMW Group Designworks; and Frank Stephenson Design's interior for Halo Space's space capsule, The Aurora.

Many of these projects have been covered in previous editions, so the 2024 highlights feature (from page 12) hones in on some of the year's most interesting new product developments – from Rosen Aviation's Immersa AudioSphere to F/List's F/Lab Natural Oil, a wood veneer finish showcased at NBAA-BACE via a partial Pilatus PC-24 cabin mockup. Trends in hard-surface finishes – from real wood to simulated options, carbon fibre and more – are explored from page 18. We also dive into the world of exterior paint, with experts expounding on what's possible and what practicalities are in play. Stay tuned to follow these trends as they evolve in the new year!

Izzy Kington, editor

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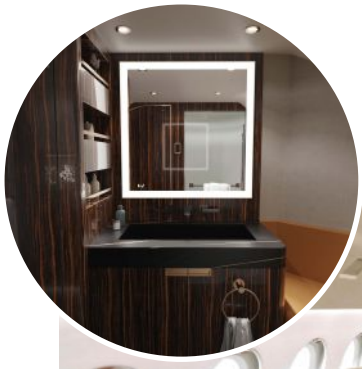
PINBOARD

THE OASIS BBJ 777-9 INTERIOR CONCEPT BY GREENPOINT TECHNOLOGIES IS DESIGNED AS A SENSORY RETREAT FOR A HIGH-NET-WORTH ENTREPRENEUR WITH AN APPRECIATION FOR EASTERN PHILOSOPHY. IT IS DESIGNED FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL AND EXTENDED FAMILY JOURNEYS, WITH AN OPEN-CONCEPT LAYOUT THAT ACCOMMODATES 49.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE THE PRIMARY SUITE, FEATURING A EUROPEAN KING-SIZED BED THAT IS FRAMED BY LIGHT OAK CEILING PANELS AND INTEGRATED LIGHTING, EXTENDING INTO A SPA-INSPIRED LAVATORY AND DRESSING ROOM.

BETWEEN THE MAIN LOUNGE AND DINING AREA, A THIN OLED SCREEN WRAPS AROUND THE ROOM DIVIDER, DISPLAYING VISUALS AND ENTERTAINMENT. OLED SCREENS OVERLAY THE WINDOWS THROUGHOUT THE CABIN, DISPLAYING ADAPTABLE ARTWORK. DETAILS INCLUDE A BACKLIT, SLATTED OAK DOME CEILING; MIRRORED CHROME-BACKED ALCOVES; CUSTOM UPHOLSTERY; AND HAND-TUFTED CARPET WITH MARBLE PATH INLAYS.

A NEW INTERIOR CONCEPT BY LIE ALONSO DYNASTY. THE TEAM WORKS TO CREATE SPACES OFFERING A FEELING OF SANCTUARY AND REFLECTING HARMONY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, TRADITION AND INNOVATION. THE DESIGN INTEGRATES WOODS, SILKS AND METALS REFLECTING WORLDLY INFLUENCES.



THIS FALCON 2000LX WAS REFURBISHED AT WEST STAR AVIATION'S SITE IN EAST ALTON, ILLINOIS. THE PROJECT INVOLVED REPLACING ALL THE SOFT GOODS, VENEER, PLATING AND PLATED INLAYS.

TEXTURED LEATHER WAS USED FOR THE LOWER SIDEWALLS. CAMBRIA QUARTZ WAS USED FOR FLOORING AND COUNTERTOPS IN BOTH THE GALLEY AND LAV.

AN ACJ TWOTWENTY CABIN DESIGN THAT WILL BE COMPLETED BY COMLUX COMPLETION.

monochrome magic

Agnès Guiu, senior aircraft interior designer at Agnès Guiu Design, created this B747-800 interior design after being contacted directly in March 2024 by a potential client based in China. Guiu shares that the individual specified this aircraft type and had "extremely high expectations in terms of luxury and style".

"After a few exchanges, I found out he would use the aircraft for two purposes: business travel with the possibility of inviting top-level guests on board, and also family trips," says Guiu.

Excited and challenged by the brief, Guiu created two different proposals. One of these was immediately accepted, and she was permitted to show the second here.

There were two areas of main interest for the client – the master bedroom and the main lounge. The master bedroom had to look like a spacious suite or private apartment, with a private entrance being a specific request. The bedroom features a bed with a canopy and surrounding curtains; two double-place divans; a vanity corner for the client's wife; a "see-through" gym room for the client; and a wide corridor leading to the washroom with wide wardrobes for both.

The other priority area, the main lounge, had to be "extra-large and extremely welcoming", Guiu shares. It features meridienne-style sofas; independent ottomans; a long dining/conference table that can accommodate six or eight guests; and a face-to-face seating area for more private talks or work.

"The big challenge of the brief was that the general look should be modern, without overwhelming decoration," explains Guiu. "Each piece had to be exceptional and the latest technologies should also be integrated, but discreetly."

"I feel extremely privileged and proud to do a job that brings together creativity, an open mind, a love for team work and the exchange of ideas to result in something exceptional and charismatic," says Guiu.

ARTWORK

The cabin features contemporary artworks to be supplied by the client, including a piece by English artist Genevieve Benett. These were positioned carefully to enhance a "subtle feeling of culture and refinement", says Guiu.

HOTEL CHIC

For the main lounge, the brief was to encapsulate the spirit of famous hotel brands such as the Savoy, Shangri-la, Four Seasons and Mandarin Oriental.

COLOUR PALETTE

Details include black crystal lamps and backlit Italian white marble – and the contrast of these elements inspired the concept's name, Bianconero.

2024 highlights

FROM A FRESH NEW IDEA FOR VENEER TO EXCITING IFE PRODUCTS AND MORE – READ ON FOR SOME OF THE MOST EYE-CATCHING DEVELOPMENTS OF 2024

Words by Izzy Kington

F/LAB NATURAL OIL

At NBAA-BACE 2024, Pilatus and F/List unveiled the fruit of their latest collaboration: a mockup of part of a Pilatus PC-24 cabin. It showcased American Walnut veneer cabinetry finished in a new offering: the transparent, plant-based, F/Lab Natural Oil. This was complemented by a bulkhead in F/Lab Aenigma Eco incorporating recycled stone dust; side panels in F/Lab Whisper Leather, the upper portion with lines of F/Lab Fresco Décor; and a F/Lab Linfinium countertop incorporating precious marble remnants. Michael Müller, MD at F/List, explains that the collaboration was inspired by two trends: demand for sustainability, and natural surfaces being recognised as luxurious. Pilatus is the first aircraft OEM to employ the F/Lab Natural Oil. Müller believes it's poised to be a game-changer for private aviation.

"Everyone entering a private jet currently is used to the cabinet being finished with lacquer," he says. "There's 1mm of lacquer surface, and underneath is a beautiful veneer. I hate it because you're not able to touch it."

He says the oil allows the warmth and grain of the veneer to be appreciated. F/List shares that the oil isn't yet certified but is qualified for aviation, having gone through the qualification process with a customer. "It was difficult to bring it to market, regarding flammability requirements, because you have the veneer treated in the right way, then you just apply the oil," says Müller.

This means it should save a lot of time in aftermarket refurbishments too, he says: "In refurbishment, the lacquering process takes up to four weeks, but you can do the full oil veneer finish process in one to two weeks. It's downsizing the lead time by 50%."

Müller shares that oil-finished surfaces have proven an eye-catcher with customers visiting the F/Lab showroom in Austria.

On the topic of durability, he explains that F/List introduces a new product first in its residential business, then if a success in terms of demand and robustness, it's introduced to aviation. The oil has graduated this process.

"If you have a scratch in a semi- or high-gloss surface, you do a re-lacquer or polish respectively," he says. "With the oil surface, where you have a scratch, you just apply a bit of oil and rub it there and it's finished: it looks completely fresh and new. It's going to be a completely new era for the aftermarket."

For more on the mockup, including comment from Pilatus, turn to the hard materials feature on page 18

Regarding the F/Lab Shapeshifter concept, Michael Müller shares that F/List is "going into phase two right now" and there will be an announcement about it in 2025. "We have several undisclosed customers who are already applying the concept in their jets," he says. "By 2025 we will see some projects with Shapeshifting concepts flying."

LEFT & ABOVE: DETAILS FROM THE PILATUS PC-24 PARTIAL MOCKUP

VENUE CMS SMART MONITORS

The first deliveries have been made of Collins Aerospace's upgraded Venue CMS. Over the years Venue has been installed on more than 1,700 aircraft, of 50 different types. "Venue scales really well from small light jets all the way up to VVIP aircraft," says Nathan Voight, VP and GM, business and regional avionics, Collins Aerospace.

A key upgrade is its integration with Collins' new smart monitors, which are available in five sizes, and enable 4K resolution. The smart monitor also works independently as a standalone IFE solution for content and Collins' HD Airshow.

"From a form factor standpoint, they're pretty compact, but allow you to use a specific monitor as the entire system," says Voight. "Each has 4TB of storage. They house the software for the entire system on each monitor."

When replacing an LRU, such as a monitor, the Venue system recognises the new unit and automatically programs it to match the system already in place. "It's really bringing a small form factor that makes it easier to install," says Voight. "It's more intuitive from a maintenance standpoint as well; it shortens the install time because you're not running additional cables and wiring to a processing or media server unit, you're doing it all right there within that monitor."

As well as the form factor, which Voight says makes the monitor "less invasive" to install, the solution includes a diagnostics application to ease maintenance in the case of a fault. "You don't have to try to deconstruct the system to troubleshoot, to find out where the issue is," he says.

Other updates include a graphical user interface (GUI) redesigned to be more intuitive to use across touchscreens, seat controls and PEDs. "Most principals in the cabin are used to touch technologies on their iPad, their phone, and we wanted to make that experience really consistent when they get onto the aircraft," says Voight. "They can have an application on their own iPad and use that to control the entire system."

"If you have a fleet or charter operation with Venue installed, you don't need a different application for each aircraft; the app identifies which aircraft you're on, and automatically updates to the configuration of that aircraft," continues Voight.

The new version of Venue also offers the capabilities it had already – including The Airshow 3D moving map; Stage media content solution; and cabin management functions. "We're looking to continue to make enhancements, make it easier, and incorporate consumer technologies as they become available and make sense within the aircraft – different display sizes and shapes, things of that nature," says Voight.

The solution is targeted at the aftermarket. "We don't have a linefit position for the Venue smart monitor," he continues. "A lot of the success we see with Venue is in the aftermarket, where someone wants the flexibility of customising a solution."

In the video interview included here, Scott Howard, director of business development for executive seating at Collins Aerospace, shares all about the expansion of its upholstery facility in Medley, Florida, and demonstrates a divan shown at NBAA-BACE 2024 incorporating various products from across the company

TOP LEFT: A CONTROL PANEL IN THE GALLEY

LEFT: A BULKHEAD-INSTALLED VENUE SMART MONITOR

CUSTOMISABLE IFE/CMS

Jet Aviation has developed its first in-house IFE and CMS software solution for use in VIP aircraft, implemented with hardware from Crestron Electronics that has been certified for aircraft use by Jet Aviation.

Crestron Electronics is an established name in the residential and yachting sectors, and Jet Aviation cited hardware reliability, availability of spare parts, service support and simplified obsolescence management as key benefits of the partnership.

Jet Aviation's engineering team in Basel, Switzerland, developed the software for the customisable and scalable solution. The interface enables control over lighting, cabin crew calls, audio, video, and custom functions.

The company said the in-house offering would simplify the process of adaptation for customers. It's available for installation as part of Jet Aviation completion and refurbishment projects. As well as fixed hardware components for crew and customer areas, passengers' tablets can be used for remote control throughout the cabin.

LEFT: THE GUI IS DESIGNED FOR EASE OF USE AND CUSTOMISATION

REAL-TIME ONLINE VIDEO-GAMING

The latest addition to Innovative Advantage's Audio, Video, and Data Distribution System (AVDS), for all business aircraft platforms, is video-gaming capabilities. The company noted that the move was enabled by the growing availability of low-latency, high-bandwidth LEO and ATG connectivity systems.

The AVDS System, in combination with fast internet connection, can provide a lag-free experience from controller to monitor, Innovative Advantage explains, as it has distributed architecture with a fibre optic backbone.

"We distribute all our video raw, and any processing required is done with high-end FPGA solutions developed in-house by our Kirkland (Washington)-based engineering team," says Greg Cornell, president at Innovative Advantage. "This means the absolute highest video quality, and none of the latency or lip-sync issues that you'd have with other architectures. Nothing but pure, beautiful 4Kp60 HDR video and uncompressed surround-sound audio."

ABOVE: THE AVDS UNIT WITH A VIDEO-GAMING CONTROLLER

IMMERSIVE AUDIO AND DISPLAY UPDATES

Rosen Aviation launched an in-seat audio system, which it demonstrated at AIX and NBAA-BACE in 2024 as part of its PO-RT-AL (Personally Optimized – Real Time – Augmented Luxury) setup. This also includes digital windows and skylights, a curved carbon-composite OLED IFE display, hologram controller and a smart cupholder with automatic heating and cooling.

The Immersa AudioSphere, designed with audio engineer Laurence Dickie, mainly leverages newly patented soundwave propagation technologies, with additional digital signal processing (DSP). In the concept demonstrated, there are 24 headrest speakers, two mid-range speakers in the lumbar area, and a haptic driver in the base of the seat. "A complex algorithm causes each speaker to fire individually at a slightly different interval," says Justin Watson, customer success manager at Rosen Aviation. "We get these converging soundwaves that collide where your ears are. The waves stack on top of each other and you hear it the loudest right at your ears. As they travel away from your ears, the waves end up cancelling each other out and dissipating. We're getting about 20dB per metre of attenuation; the further away you are, the quieter it is."

Watson says this creates an "audio hologram" with tone, timbre, depth and width, ensuring that "when you're watching a movie, you get the sensation of where individual sounds are coming from". Rosen's plans to develop the concept further include enabling lie-flat capabilities.

The company also announced updates to its IFE displays, including smart capabilities, 4K HDR resolution, a weight-saving carbon-composite chassis and next-generation electronics that use Qualcomm's 8550 mobile processor. "Mobile processors are designed to be very fast, powerful and efficient," says Watson. "What we essentially have created is a light IFE system that can stand independently from the cabin system. It can act as the server, host, distribute and sync everything, so we don't need additional boxes to support this if you want to just install new displays and have a new smart system."

The displays can host a 4K 3D moving map, rendered in real time. Displays can sync together to play the same content simultaneously. The electronics can be mounted to the display or located hundreds of feet away with a fibre optic connection and centralised electronics bay – enabling the displays to be thinner.

ABOVE: A CONCEPT SEAT USED TO DEMO THE AUDIO

LEFT: PORTAL ALSO DEMOED DIGITAL DISPLAYS, SMART CUPHOLDERS AND MORE

The display updates will likely be available in late 2025 or potentially 2026, but in the interim – or if customers don't want to replace their displays – the 4K moving map and smart features are available through boxes that work with any HDMI-connected display on an aircraft with connectivity

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Natu NURTURE

Business jet owners these days have many options beyond traditional wood veneer when it comes to hard surfaces in the cabin. Their choice may factor in not only design preferences, but also service life and maintenance considerations. Manufacturers can simulate the appearance of materials like wood, carbon fibre, and marble using hydrographic and vinyl wraps.

Although Duncan Aviation uses real veneer in many cases, it has been experimenting with simulated finishes for over a decade in its refurbishment projects, providing alternative solutions for veneer and other natural materials. "We combine a lot of the techniques together," says Nate Klenke, sales manager, modifications. "Within a full shipset of cabinets where we're using hydrodipping technology, it may not all be applied the same. Some may be applied to another substrate and then applied to a cabinet; some may be directly onto the cabinet."

Klenke says as the techniques have been refined, the simulated product has become very convincing. "We use automated sprayers so that we apply the same amount of activator to the film before the product gets dipped," says Klenke. "If you do it by hand, it's not consistent, you kind of push the product around so you don't get straight lines on patterns like carbon fibre. We have racks now that will dip product into the tank so that it's done at a consistent pace and the pattern goes on the way it was intended."

Installation techniques are another part of making simulated veneer convincing. "If you know what to look for, you can see it's simulated, but we've done some things to even hide that as well," says Klenke. "On a drawer for example, the face may have been dipped completely, and the edges would have had the grain running in one direction. Now we can do it so that the grain runs in the other direction."

MAIN & INSET: WOOD VENEER FROM F/LIST

re

WHILE REAL NATURAL MATERIALS ARE PARTICULARLY LUXURIOUS, THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY VIABLE OPTIONS FOR BUSINESS JET CABINS – AND THERE ARE MANY FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE CHOICE

Words by Marisa Garcia

A growing number of Duncan's projects include some type of simulated finish – often applied to countertops and parts with unique shapes, like drink rails, and in cabinets to a more limited extent. Some natural materials are more straightforward to simulate than others. "Marble and stone are much easier than carbon fibre," Klenke says.

REPAIR ADVANTAGES

One of the main advantages of simulated veneer is the ability to repair damage more easily than natural materials may allow. "Wood veneer is grain-matched across the entire face of a cabinet," says Klenke. "That doesn't mean I can just repair that drawer front; I have to do the whole cabinet face. Say that veneer was sourced six years ago from a specific log; I now have to find something that will match to replace the whole face. With a simulated finish, we can go back to the stored image of it, find its location on the cabinet, and re-apply to just that area."

FROM WASTE TO WONDER

F/List is expanding the range of hard surface materials with its latest sustainability-focused alternatives that while processed, incorporate natural materials.

The range includes Linfinium, a linseed-based compound mixed with other materials to create hard surfaces with different textures and colours. Linfinium can be applied to countertops and flooring. "Linfinium is a completely new way of thinking, for countertops or work surfaces for example," explains Michael Müller of F/List. "We are able to upcycle materials from our shop floor. But we can go even further; we can talk to our customers to look at the waste in their production process, and use these materials with the recipe we have. We're applying that waste, and creating completely new countertops, which look very smooth."

"Open grain is when you can feel the texture – customers want to make sure that it is not a fake wood"

Turn to page 12 for details on the F/List Natural Oil finish for wood veneer – and the Pilatus PC-24 partial cabin mockup demonstrating its use

LEFT: THE PILATUS PC-24 CABIN

INSET LEFT: THE PARTIAL PILATUS PC-24 MOCKUP INCORPORATING F/LIST MATERIALS

TOP: F/LIST WOOD VENEER

ABOVE INSET: AN AIRBUS ACJ TWOTWENTY BEDROOM

This ease of repair makes simulated finishes popular with charter operators and others with high aircraft utilisation, Klenke says. While using simulated surfaces to patch a damaged natural surface is theoretically possible, Klenke says simulated veneer can't fully replicate the complexity and depth of grain of its natural counterpart. "That's why real product is still so much more luxurious, especially in a wood veneer," he adds.

RECLAIMED VENEER

Another option is reclaimed veneer, which Adam White, CEO of Comlux America, explains is being used increasingly, offering a sustainability-focused option. "It's still wood, but they're not cutting down a virgin tree," he says. "It actually gives it quite a bit more character than the traditional approaches."

Comlux sees less demand for hydrodipping. "We are starting to see some non-organic materials like carbon fibre used in decorative applications, or even for bulkheads for a modern, clean look and feel," explains White. "It's not over the top, but it is starting to replace some of the rare species or different types of woods that we use."

Sylvain Mariat, head of Airbus Corporate Jets Creative Design, says that natural materials are the preferred option: "We have many options depending on the certification of the aircraft; most of the time we can use a real wood. It's the way we like to do it. We have to select the exact wood designed by the customer, and also the varnish quality; it could be matte, satin or polished very bright."

Mariat says that sometimes government or military aircraft certification standards are akin to public transportation ones, which can mean real wood doesn't meet flammability requirements. In such cases, simulated wood is one option. Mariat prefers to go with "more contemporary", high-quality paint instead, not attempting to mimic wood, but will follow the client's wishes.

Even when real wood veneer is chosen, there is still the choice of varnish to consider. Mariat has noted a

AIRBUS IMAGE: AIRBUS SAS 2023/ADRIEN DASTE

growing trend of customers asking for open-grain wood textures. "Open grain is when you can feel the texture of the wood, it's not flat," explains Mariat. "Customers want to make sure that it is not a fake wood."

Michael Müller, managing director at F/List, says that affluent private jet owners want an experience similar to their living rooms at home: "They don't see any reason why real, natural wood surfaces, oiled surfaces, are not applicable on their aeroplane."

F/List has a new development to meet this demand: the transparent, plant-based, F/Lab Natural Oil, doing away with the lacquering process. It was showcased at NBAA-BACE 2024 – along with sustainability-focused materials F/Lab Aenigma Eco, F/Lab Whisper Leather, F/Lab Fresco Décor and F/Lab Linfinium –on a partial PC-24 cabin mockup developed in collaboration with Pilatus.

TRIGGERING DEMAND

André Zimmermann, VP of business aviation at Pilatus, hasn't seen a lot of demand for sustainable options, but thinks this can result from manufacturers showing the possibilities. "We're very curious to see what the customer thinks about it," says Zimmermann. "If you always wait for the customer to ask for something, you're kind of late. If you can offer it to the customer, say we have an option to the more normal leather and veneers, we have something that is built with a sustainable mindset, so why not take this as an option to the norm? Then I think you trigger a demand."

Zimmermann is excited about the "many opportunities" in colour and texture offered by the F/List materials incorporated in the mockup. "Let's see how the market reacts," he adds.

In terms of F/List's existing range, Müller says demand continues apace for stone veneer, and the

COLOUR CHANGES

Simulated veneer can be a helpful alternative when the client wants a wood species or finish that may have maintenance problems in the long term. Nate Klenke of Duncan Aviation gives the example of bleached wood. "Bleach destroys part of the wood, so you don't always know how the wood will react," he says. "Once the sun hits it, it will start to change colour, and all woods will change differently. Not all areas of that product may do the same thing. Years ago, a grey-stained bird's eye maple was a popular wood species in a lot of aircraft. But the dye would change green, slowly over time, and you wouldn't really notice it until you removed a shroud that was covering part of the veneered surface. It would always happen more in the entry area than in the rest of the cabin. So when you chemically alter a veneer like that with bleach or dyes, you just don't know how over time it's going to react and change colour."

Simulated finishes avoid this. "We can control some of that colour change; we have a better chance of knowing what will happen because it's a more stable solution over natural materials," he says.

TECHNOLOGICAL *consistency*

The process of creating faux finishes has advanced a lot over the years, as Nate Klenke of Duncan Aviation explains. "I've been doing this for 28 years now, and when I first started, we would faux finish countertops to look like marble, but it was hand-painted," he says. "It wasn't a dip, and it wasn't a vinyl. It was an artist in our shop painting this vein and layering it to give it depth."

Klenke says that the new technologies allow greater consistency and are much more efficient to apply: "The tools to do it are much easier and rely less on an artist than on technology at this point."

LEFT: RECLAIMED WOOD VENEER OPTIONS FROM COMLUX

BELOW LEFT: A FALCON 50 INTERIOR BY DUNCAN AVIATION, INCLUDING HYDROGRAPHIC DIPPED VENEER

Dassault Aviation Business Services launched a Smart Cabinetry Repair service in 2024, using UV curing technology to repair scratches of up to about 3in (7.6cm) in high-gloss wood surfaces in less than two hours

"We use automated sprayers so we apply the same amount of activator to the film before the product gets dipped"

next step is heated stone flooring. "An upcoming demand, which is increasing, is that people who are having the stone floor, want it matched to the countertops and to the work surface," Müller adds.

CARBON FIBRE

Another trend is the continued appeal of carbon fibre. "We're putting a lot of carbon fibre into the aircraft, for accents," shares Matthew Bergwall, executive director of the Vision Jet product line at Cirrus. "Carbon fibre has been something that we've seen as accents and put in our aircraft in 2009, and it's still something that is very well requested."

Comlux's White thinks that the appeal of carbon fibre has lasted longer than perhaps the industry expected. "Some of the different colours and ways that they're using that material now are quite interesting," he says. "Whether it's a fad or not, I don't know, but it's a non-organic material. It's interesting to see it being used."

While it is a look that can be simulated, ACJ's Mariat again prefers the real deal. "Sometimes we have a customer who wants to see the real carbon fibre – so same, I don't like to use fake coloured fibre," he comments. "When you want to use a real carbon fibre we have/had a partnership with an automotive manufacturer that can apply the fabric of the carbon fibre, with the direction of the fabric perfectly managed, you don't have any kind of disruption. It's very difficult to manage, but when it works, it's very nice. But I think it was more trendy before."

Natural or not, deciding which hard materials work best in any project is ultimately up to the customer. White of Comlux explains that it is the interior design team's job to enable the customer to make informed choices by explaining the benefits and limitations of each option. "They hear the customer requests," he says. "They're the front line in saying, 'Well, here's the drawbacks of doing something like that' – not that we can't do it, it might be a question of time and money. They explain the difference between a reclaimed veneer and typical veneer, and even what the coating appliqué is as well. They hear a lot of that, and come back with a more refined product to review."

Voc

WITH MORE THAN 50 AIRCRAFT INTERIOR SCHEMES ALREADY IN ITS FRACTIONAL FLEET, FLEXJET IS HOLDING A PUBLIC DESIGN COMPETITION TO COME UP WITH THE NEXT ONE

Words by Rob Coppinger

A FLEXJET INTERIOR DESIGNED IN COLLABORATION WITH BENTLEY, DIRECTLY INSPIRED BY FLEXJET CHAIRMAN KENN RICCI'S OWN BENTLEY BACALAR

nouli

Flexjet's US-based fleet comprises the Embraer Phenom 300 and Praetor 500 and 600; Bombardier Challenger 350 and 3500; and Gulfstream G450 and G650 types, while its European fleet includes the Praetor 600 and G650

RED LABEL *academy*

Fractional provider Flexjet has long been interested in leveraging interior design as a differentiator for its fleet – with more than 50 unique designs across its 300 aircraft. Many of these were created by its two in-house designers, but the company has also previously got outside firms like Bentley involved in designing interiors that ended up becoming very popular, according to Kenn Ricci, chairman at Flexjet. "Our customers would always remember they were on the aircraft with the Bentley interior," he says.

This year, Flexjet partnered with luxury yacht and pleasure vessel specialist Ferretti Group for a Gulfstream G650 interior inspired by Riva motor yachts. That interior will be introduced in 2025.

But the company had a particularly novel plan for its next aircraft: throw the invite open

Complementing its interior designs, Flexjet also wants its in-cabin service to be memorable. In November 2023 it opened a dedicated space for training its cabin servers – the Red Label Academy at Farnborough Airport in the UK. Red Label is the name for Flexjet's service and hospitality ethos.

Flexjet employs more than 180 cabin servers, all of whom have now completed the Red Label training. The programme makes use of large mock-ups of Gulfstream cabins, and is also open to inquisitive customers. "The course consists of learning the preparation of foods, acquisition of foods and then operating in those spaces," says Kenn Ricci. "All large-cabin customers enjoy food and beverage service from our cabin servers. The academy elevates the level of service our customers receive."

ABOVE: FLEXJET RECENTLY PARTNERED WITH LUXURY LUGGAGE BRAND GLOBE TROTTER TO CREATE A LIMITED-EDITION COLLECTION

LEFT: THE BENTLEY BACALAR-INSPIRED INTERIOR DESIGN

LEFT INSET: STUDENTS AT THE RED LABEL ACADEMY

"Our customers would always remember they were on the aircraft with the Bentley interior"

to literally anyone interested in submitting an interior proposal, with a US$100,000 (€94,466) prize for the designer of the winning scheme.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The Project LXi – Design the Ultimate Private Jet Interior contest was inspired by social media. "Whenever we go on Instagram and feature one of our interiors, we get a tremendous amount of likes and followers on it," says Ricci. "So why not have a contest? That's the nexus of how this was born."

Gen Z social media experts are expected to be a key source of design ideas. "I'm on the board at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and a lot of the students get involved," says Ricci. "This money means a lot to a student; it means a lot to an up-and-coming aviator; and they're passionate about it and it's a fun thing to do. I suspect we'll get a lot more participants, suggestions and contributions from a student population."

Ricci also gives the example of an airport lineman who took the opportunity in October 2024, when greeting Ricci, to mention he was submitting a design.

PRIZE MONEY

The six-figure prize was decided to be a suitable sum given the work and passion it takes to design a custom cabin. Ricci shares that a new custom cabin project is in the US$3m (€2.8m) range for a smaller jet, and in the

RECENT *acquisitions*

With the August 2023 acquisition of Flying Colours, 250 team members joined Flexjet, bringing the group's total number of technicians to 1,100. The move expanded Flexjet's maintenance and product support network, with facilities in the USA, Canada and Europe. Headquartered in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, Flying Colours offers MRO, interior refurbishment and custom aircraft painting expertise. Flying Colours' primary 40,000ft² (3,716m²) paint hangar and 61,000ft² (5,667m²) completions hangars at its facility at Peterborough Airport can handle multiple aircraft simultaneously.

With the acquisition of Constant Aviation, Flexjet added capabilities in areas such as in-house engineering and avionics installation, heavy maintenance, engine and component overhaul, and non-destructive testing. Constant Aviation also has an AOG mobile response network that deploys from 28 locations in the continental US and can serve Caribbean markets too.

With Flying Colours and Constant Aviation on board, Flexjet's global maintenance facility footprint now includes 12 primary maintenance facilities and 30 geographically strategic AOG teams.

"We wanted to capture attention and think of it as marketing"

US$4m (€3.8m) range for a large one; and he says third-party designer charges typically account for 7 to 10% of this total cost. "So actually, the prize is probably not an exorbitant amount," he says. "But also we wanted to make it interesting. We wanted to make it worthwhile. We wanted to capture attention and think of it as marketing."

The competition closes at the 23:59ET on 28 February 2025. Designers have complete freedom for the theme. Carpet patterns, sidewall colours and materials, wood veneers, seating materials and their colours and accents are left to their discretion.

THE BRIEF

The competitors are asked to enter designs likely to "surprise and delight" Flexjet aircraft owners, while also providing the sort of welcoming and elegant experience owners are accustomed to. The design needs to use materials appropriate for an inflight environment regulated by aviation (FAA) rules. The brief also is to differentiate Flexjet from other private flight providers.

ABOVE: THE LIMITED-EDITION FLEXJET X GLOBE TROTTER LUGGAGE COLLECTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN IVORY WITH A STEEL LEATHER TRIM OR ORIGINAL BROWN WITH A BURGUNDY LEATHER TRIM

ABOVE RIGHT: A RENDERING OF THE NEW FLEXJET TERMINAL AT FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT, TO INCLUDE A MOCK FUSELAGE LOUNGE

INSET: FLEXJET CHAIRMAN – AND COMPETITION ARBITER – KENN RICCI

"You can imagine that after 50 or 60 designs it becomes more complicated to come up with something new, novel, unique," Ricci explains.

PUBLIC-VOTED SHORTLIST

Flexjet's panel of judges will select 10 semi-finalists from the submissions, to put to a public vote on Instagram. The three that receive the highest number of public votes will meet individually with the Flexjet team for a virtual question and answer session. The designer will be expected to show the team how they envision the design coming to life and how well they understand their identity as a designer.

Ricci will then consider the top three – they will travel to the company's global headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, to present their designs to him and he will choose the winner. He's used to being the final arbiter. "We say, kiddingly, that we have an art committee with only one voting member," he says. "That's me. I approve every design that goes in."

The Globe-Trotter collection is available for anyone to buy on the Flexjet boutique but Flexjet owners get preferential pricing

FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT INVESTMENT

Following the opening of Flexjet House, a sales and experience centre in London's Mayfair, earlier in 2024, the company is now investing in a new private terminal at Farnborough Airport. It's sited in a 2,098m² (22,583ft²) ramp-side building and will be dedicated to Flexjet passengers, staffed with Flexjet team members, its first in Europe. Construction began in September 2024 and it is expected to open in early 2026.

The terminal is designed in line with Flexjet's ideas for personalised service and onboard hospitality. The interior was designed by Carver Hain Art & Design, featuring an entrance lounge, concierge desk, owners' bar with meeting spaces, a dining area, and a central formal bar. It will also house Flexjet's Tactical Control Centre and operations teams, Red Label Academy, modern workspaces and pilot amenities.

When it comes to implementing the winning design on a Flexjet aircraft, the company's acquisition in 2023 of Constant Aviation and interior outfitting specialist Flying Colours could expedite matters.

"On a large-cabin aircraft, it would be close to six to seven months to get the interior done," says Ricci. "With Flying Colours, they do it in more of a production capacity, and they also have the capability to do six aeroplanes simultaneously. That shortened our production time to three to four months."

It's all part of a very strong focus on interiors, driven by Ricci's belief in the importance of clients finding the company's aircraft interiors "unique, interesting and special". He emphasises that the array of customised cabins also represent a company culture of attention to detail: "They demonstrate that we have a passion for the business; we take the time to custom-design each interior."

POP

AIRCRAFT OWNERS MAY BE GETTING BOLDER WITH THEIR PAINT SCHEMES, BUT NOTHING IS SIMPLE TO ACHIEVE IN THE WORLD OF EXTERIOR PERSONALISATION

Words by Rob Coppinger

art

THE 10,000TH CIRRUS SR SERIES G7, FEATURING LIMITED-EDITION INTERIOR AND PAINT

Personalisation has really taken off when it comes to aircraft exterior paintwork – at least that's the finding of Nate Klenke, modifications sales manager at Duncan Aviation. "It used to be that everybody worried about resale, resulting in liveries with base white colours and a few coloured stripes," he explains. "Owners are becoming more courageous, and saying, 'If I'm going to paint the aircraft, I want to do it the way I like it'. We've done a number of custom schemes that involve unique designs, custom metallics and pearls, representations of carbon graphite. I think people are excited to do designs on their aircraft that are more personal to them."

He believes the increased demand for bolder schemes is due both to higher customer expectations and larger aircraft. These trends, especially the growth in business jet sizes, have led to Duncan Aviation's paint shop expansions. Klenke recalls when the company began painting business aircraft, its projects were typically small-cabin aircraft, and the firm "didn't require a very big hangar to accommodate half a dozen aircraft".

"Several years ago, we really saw aircraft sizes growing, and that's been the impetus for our expansions since 2001, when we started building much larger hangars with taller hangar doors," says Klenke. "With the demand for large-cabin, international aircraft, we needed to increase the size of our hangars to accommodate the growing business fleet."

In December 2024 Duncan Aviation began construction of a US$25m (€23.6m) paint facility with a new 32,500ft² (3,019m²) dual-bay paint hangar, and adjacent 9,000ft² (836m²) storage and support area at its

DOWN-DRAFT OR CROSS-DRAFT

While Duncan Aviation has both down-draft and cross-draft booths, the new facility will be a cross-draft booth. Nate Klenke says both are very effective; just involving different methods of painting.

"It's about where the air is coming from and going to," he explains. "With a down-draft booth, the air is going from top to bottom, so when you're spraying, the particles want to settle straight down. In a cross-draft booth, the air particles are pulling across the aircraft. In a cross-draft booth, you'll start at the air intake, and paint the aircraft as it goes down, so all your over-spray is not going on to the areas you have already painted."

MAIN: A FISH-INSPIRED SCHEME ON A PILATUS PC-12 PAINTED AND REFURBISHED BY DUNCAN AVIATION

RIGHT: A CHALLENGER 3500 PAINTED AT DUNCAN AVIATION

BELOW INSET: AKZONOBEL'S COLOUR OF THE YEAR FOR 2025 IS A YELLOW NAMED 'TRUE JOY'

At Duncan Aviation, safety harnesses are required to be used when working on elevated aircraft surfaces, lifts or ladders

MRO site in Lincoln, Nebraska. It will connect directly to an existing 45,000ft² (1,765m²) paint facility built in 2012, which will continue in use. However, upon the new facility's completion (expected in January 2026), paint bays 1 and 2, built in 1990, will be decommissioned. As well as supporting larger aircraft, the overall move is about adding flexibility for larger aircraft (more detailed schemes), unscheduled and drop-in touch-ups, registration number changes and so on.

UNDER COVER OF DARK

In terms of livery design trends, Klenke has been seeing requests for dark base colours over the complete aircraft, driven by the desire to create consistency between exterior and interior during refurbishment. Recent projects include a Gulfstream G200 with a merlot base, and a Gulfstream GV dressed in olive green. There's also been demand for fades. "If you paint-fade across a small span, it's fairly easy to do; but when you're talking about evenly spreading that fade across a large-cabin fuselage, keeping the fade consistent has been a real challenge," says Klenke.

Paint decisions can also factor in maintenance concerns. "People like fades, but they will find out they're really difficult to maintain," says Klenke. "When they need to do maintenance, it's really hard to maintain or touch up that fade after access panels have been removed to complete the maintenance.

When fades, dark base or metallic base colours are requested, we have specific discussions with our clients about what it takes to maintain a custom paint scheme.

"Theoretically we can paint an aircraft any way somebody would like it, but there's inspection panels, hydraulic fluid and fuel, and all those things can make it more difficult to maintain the quality of the paint over time. When they come in for an annual or scheduled inspection, access is required and several panels and farings will be pulled off to complete the maintenance. It's important to pull off those panels very carefully to minimise damage to the paint; when you put them back on, touch-up will be required and many of those custom paints or complex schemes become very difficult to match or replicate. There's a higher level of maintenance required when you go into custom liveries. During the design phase, we'll suggest adjusting locations of different elements of the design to convey the same aesthetic and reduce potential challenges in maintenance."

"There's a higher level of maintenance when you go into custom liveries"

AIR *showers*

Duncan Aviation has designed its new paint hangar in Lincoln (see image overleaf) using lessons from previous expansions in Lincoln, and at its other facilities in Battle Creek, Michigan, and Provo, Utah.

"Employee safety is one of those areas we include in our hangar designs, with features like walk-through air curtains for employees," explains Nate Klenke of Duncan Aviation. "When they're coming out of a booth after sanding or painting, we have air curtains designed to get rid of hazards like VOCs and chromates."

Regulations around exit markings, registration numbers and placards also have to be factored in.

Matthew Bergwall, executive director of the Vision Jet product line at Cirrus, also notes there are many considerations to bear in mind when meeting customers' paint ideas. Cirrus offers customisation for the Vision Jet through its Xi Design programme. "Our owners have very specific tastes, and we try to cater to those tastes with different trim levels," says Bergwall. "Individuality with aircraft can be kind of tricky. We can't just paint any aircraft any colour. We have to think about heat. We have to think about how it can be used in the field. You can only have so many colours, you can only paint certain places on the aircraft. With the interior, we can only have certain materials, because you have to go through all the different testing to ensure everything is certified. Our designers know where these constraints are, but also understand what our owners' desires are, and they mesh those two. The Cirrus designers are smart enough to get exactly what our owners want, but within the constraints of the aviation environment."

Duncan Aviation paints about 105 aircraft a year in Lincoln and 250 aircraft company-wide

Sylvain Mariat, head of Airbus Corporate Jet (ACJ) Creative Design, shares that while his team are interior rather than graphic designers, they are sometimes asked to create exterior designs. "As we are creative, we love to explore with the customer what we can do," says Mariat, adding that because of the specialist nature of exterior paint, he teams up with a long-term Airbus designer specialised in external livery, to ensure the vision is feasible. "He designed the previous Airbus logo, with the circle," says Mariat. "Every time we have this demand, I prefer to go to Toulouse and have a discussion with him, to be sure that what we want to do is possible, because we are also constrained by the aircraft itself. You can't paint the horizontal part of the wings black, for example, because of the sun. There's the chemical aspect. But we can play with other colours and details so that at the end it is exactly as a customer wants."

ABOVE: DUNCAN AVIATION PAINT SPECIALISTS AT WORK

ABOVE RIGHT: AN ACJ TWOTWENTY SHARKLET IN BLACK AND WHITE

BELOW: A RENDERING OF THE PLANNED NEW DUNCAN AVIATION PAINT FACILITY IN LINCOLN

LIGHTING THE CANVAS

The design is validated with the customer using real-time visualisation technology. He also notes that it's very important to have consistent lighting in the renderings and the paint bay to ensure specific colours turn out as expected, recalling one hotel brand that requested a very specific shade of black. "It was important to be sure that it all worked with the light you will get in the bay, because you cannot have an interference of colours. We are well equipped at Airbus to check if it's a great product."

Lighting is a point Klenke of Duncan Aviation also brings up as of key importance in paint facilities. It has to be 'true white'. "Try painting something in a space where there is only one source of lighting: it's hard to tell where you're getting the correct coverage," says Klenke. "Paint has a translucence. Complete and consistent coverage is very important to ensure colour consistency across the entire aircraft. Depending on the colour, complete cover can take several coats of paint so it is very important that you have good lighting and minimise shadowing in the area the aircraft is being painted in."

AIRBUS IMAGE: AIRBUS SAS 2023/ADRIEN DASTE

RECYCLING AT A PAINT FACILITY

Water handling and treatment are important aspects of paint hangar design across all Duncan Aviation's sites. "We have a variety of water handling methods at our various paint locations," says Nate Klenke. "Whether the contaminant is removed through compression, distillation or thermally, the result yields water that has been processed to remove the chemicals and waste, and it's safe for the environment."

The firm recycles acetone used during the paint process. "In the first go around, we may use it to clean and prep the aircraft surface," says Klenke. "When done, rags are disposed of properly, and spare acetone is taken into a distiller to remove contaminants and prepare it for reuse. When it comes out, it's not pure enough to use in aircraft prep so we use it to clean paint guns and equipment in the shop."

Klenke says the industry moved away from using MEK as a paint stripper several years ago. "Many modern paint strippers have transitioned to a peroxide base so it can be neutralised with water," he says.

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GLORIOUS FOOD

EXPERTS SHARE THE LATEST IN GALLEY EQUIPMENT AND TRENDS – PLUS WHAT TO EXPECT AT WTCE 2025

Words by Izzy Kington

Induction oven

The Gusto induction oven was created to satisfy fine palates on board. "The induction system technology offers a wide range of positives compared to a conventional oven," says Lucio Iacobucci, president and CEO of Iacobucci HF Aerospace. "It is safer, as none of its parts get hot during operation. It is multifunctional, replacing rice cookers and toasters, offering a quicker food reheating service, fresh meals and roasted fish and meat like in a five-star restaurant, for a gourmet food experience."

As well as ovens, Iacobucci HF Aerospace's catering equipment range includes espresso/beverage makers, trash compactors and trolleys. The company pays attention to its internal processes and those of suppliers; product weight reduction, especially during the conception and design phase; the reduction of electricity consumption; and sustainability, involving alternative materials and new technologies. It constantly tries to make its products increasingly simple, long-lasting and safe, both in terms of hardware and software.

LEFT: THE GUSTO INDUCTION OVEN FROM IACOBUCCI HF AEROSPACE

Iacobucci HF Aerospace also offers a cooking station, the Induction Plate Unit, for aircraft

Customised GALLEYS

Safran Cabin adapts its manufacturing processes for the components that make up its galleys, to meet challenges including equipment space constraints and product finish.

"Storage space is taken into particular consideration in optimising equipment," says Paul Neary, VP of sales for the Americas. "Some clients call for more subtle reconfigurations, such as the addition of three compartments at the expense of electrical equipment. Then the challenge is complying with regulations. In a sector where quality standards can impose many restrictions, details inspire us to innovate. Our specialised finishing centre offers multiple solutions with matte or glossy finishes."

ABOVE: SAFRAN CABIN COFFEEMAKERS

LEFT: THE NEW GALLEY STACK FROM ENFLITE

Safran Cabin supplies full galley structures as well as galley inserts – including products designed specifically for business jets

Galley stack

Enflite debuted a new galley stack design at NBAA-BACE 2024. "We're seeing a lot of these new exposed appliances in some of the new Gulfstream, Bombardier and Dassault aircraft," explains Billy Makovy, sales account manager at Enflite. "This is our own unique design."

The stack shown includes two coffeemakers, a microwave and a convection oven. The appliances have new glass front faces, and a graphical display with capacitive touch switches.

The coffeemaker can be filled at the front with bottled water, so it doesn't have to plumb to the aircraft. It has a thermally insulated carafe, so no hot plate.

It uses self-contained pillow packs, which Makovy says produce less mess. It has a removable reservoir for ease of cleaning. The unit produces 54oz (1.5 litres) of coffee in roughly eight minutes. If a customer wants a cup of coffee earlier, the brew cycle can be paused.

The microwave has a 10.6in (27cm) rotating carousel, taking a full-size plate. It takes two minutes and 15 seconds to pop a full bag of popcorn. "We've tested our unit alongside commercial units – popping popcorn, boiling water, cooking different frozen foods," says Makovy. "The performance is just like your microwave at home."

The convection ovens are designed for zero clearance and even flow. "The outside only gets warm to the touch; you can run this at 450°F (232.2°C) for four hours, touch the outside and you're not going to burn yourself," says Makovy. "Inside, there's an even flow to each of the racks, so you don't have to switch food items around."

There's also a new 7.5ft³ (212.4 litre) compressor-based refrigerator. It will operate from 15°F to 65°F (-9.4°C to 18.3°C). "It's a more modular concept," explains Makovy. "We can take the door off, send it to the completion centre, and they can add whatever veneer they want to match the cabinetry. The shell of the refrigerator is its own component."

The cooling module is also removable for easier servicing without having to remove the entire unit. Enflite can scale the size of the refrigerator cabinet, hinge the door on the left or right, implement in 115AC or 28VDC power, and deliver the door in brushed stainless steel or a black powder coat.

WTCE 2025

World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo (WTCE) is set to return to Hamburg, Germany, on 8-10 April 2025, and will be a great place to soak up the latest developments in the inflight catering, passenger comfort and onboard services industry. There will be five pillars to the 2025 event – technology, beverages, sustainability, nutrition, and allergens and special meals – with an official ambassador to represent each, to help ensure WTCE remains aligned with key industry trends and provide advice and knowledge throughout the exhibition.

The technology ambassador is Kai Kosicki, CEO of ExpAir and member of The Hayward Partnership Group His consultancy work focuses on optimising the onboard experience to meet rising expectations without driving up costs.

Kelly Stevenson, the beverage ambassador, holds a diploma in Wine and Spirits from the Wine & Spirits Education Trust (WSET), is a Certified Sommelier and a member of the Cicerone beer programme.

The sustainability ambassador is Matt Crane, founder of the Aviation Sustainability Forum (ASF), bringing a wealth of expertise on cabin waste management and sustainable practices.

Nutrition ambassador Melissa Adamski is an accredited dietitian and nutritionist, founder of Nutted Out Nutrition, which supports the travel sector through food, nutrition and dietary guidance.

Finally, the allergens and special meals ambassador is Julianne Ponan MBE, founder of allergen-free brand Creative Nature. She brings insights from the free-from food space, living with severe anaphylaxis and multiple food allergies herself.

At the Taste of Travel Theatre, the ambassadors will host talks and networking sessions, amongst other key spokespeople.

KAI KOSICKI

KELLY STEVENSON

MATT CRANE

MELISSA ADAMSKI

JULIANNE PONAN MBE

BACKGROUND IMAGE: GOODRING@STOCKADOBE.COM; MATT CRANE IMAGE: RENDY ARYANTO/VVS.SG; KELLY STEVENSON IMAGE: STUART BAILEY

ABOVE: THE WTCE 2025 AMBASSADORS

RIGHT: THE SHOW FLOOR AT A PREVIOUS WTCE EVENT

Enflite Develops Next Generation Galley Appliance Stack

Enflite brings to market a next generation suite of galley appliances with enhanced aesthetic features designed around ease of use and operational efficiency. The new galley stack includes front-filled coffee makers, an even flow convection oven and full-size microwave that combined all provide an overall robust design with exceptional cooking quality and performance.

Contact: solutions@enflite.com or +1-512-868-3399

ADAPT FOR THE FUTURE

Emerging technologies and processes are aimed at reducing the environmental impact of advanced materials manufacturing

TAPIS

Since its inception, Ultraleather has been recognised as a high-performance fabric and over the years, it has continuously evolved in an effort to keep pace with advances in sustainability. "Today, each Ultraleather product incorporates an array of environmentally conscious features that will only continue to grow and adapt in the future," says Lauren Kenealy, marketing director at Tapis.

Ultraleather is a popular choice for business jet seating applications, thanks in part to its versatility and durability. Notably, it now also has Tencel Modal fibres woven into its fabric. Made by Lenzing, a leader in sustainability-focused, wood-based fibres, these fibres are primarily sourced from beech wood harvested from certified, sustainable forests in Austria and neighbouring regions. Tencel Modal fibres are produced with a closed-loop system that recycles water and solvents, aiming to minimise environmental impact. "Ultraleather is the first and only polyurethane fabric to incorporate these Tencel Modal fibres within its backcloth," says Kenealy.

All Ultraleather products with 100% rayon backcloth – including Ultraleather Original, Pro, Bolero, Dwell and Linen – feature these fibres.

"The use of Tencel Modal fibres results in a significant environmental advantage, with production emitting approximately 81.5% less greenhouse gas compared with conventional modal fabrics, thanks to the use of over 83% bioenergy in its manufacturing," says Kenealy.

RECYCLED RESOURCES

All Ultraleather products currently featuring 65% polyester and 35% rayon backcloth will be updated to incorporate recycled and responsibly sourced materials. This includes the use of Repreve, a recycled polyester made from post-consumer plastic bottles and post-industrial polyester. For every yard of fabric, approximately 8.3 recycled plastic bottles are repurposed, contributing to waste reduction and energy conservation.

In addition, the rayon fibres used in these products will be sourced from Ecovero, a branded viscose alternative produced by Lenzing. "Ecovero fibres are made from sustainable wood sources and have a 50% lower water impact and 50% fewer emissions compared with generic viscose, as calculated by the Higg Materials Sustainability Index," says Kenealy.

Products such as Promessa, Promessa AV, Tottori, Coast and Pumice will feature these new resources.

BIO-BASED MATERIALS

In 2019, Ultraleather Volar Bio was launched as the first bio-based collection, marking a major step toward reducing reliance on finite resources. This material

BELOW: ULTRALEATHER IS PRODUCED IN A WIDE VARIETY OF COLOURS

Ultraleather is one third of the weight of natural leather

ABOVE: ULTRALEATHER IN THE SANCTUARY COLOUR PALETTE

is made with 29% USDA BioPreferred Program-certified content, derived from renewable resources like wood pulp and corn-derived resins. Currently, Ultraleather Volar Bio includes Susterra propanediol, sourced from US corn, which does not compete with food production.

"Susterra is 100% bio-based, offering an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional fossil fuels," say Kenealy.

Following the success of Volar Bio, the use of Susterra is being expanded for customised products in commercial airline interiors. "These products can now include up to 70% renewable resources, combining Susterra with Tencel Modal fibres for even greater sustainability," says Kenealy.

ADVANCING SUEDE

In addition to Ultraleather, Tapis has been working with its mills to improve the sustainability of its faux suede products. Ultrasuede, for example, is moving towards being a 100% plant-based product. Since 2012, Ultrasuede has incorporated ultra-fine fibres derived from recycled plant-based PET, made from by-products of food processing, specifically the non-edible parts of sugar cane. With this shift, Ultrasuede now contains 30% plant-based polyester.

TapiSuede, another high-performance material from Tapis, is made using 84% less energy than traditional virgin polyester, the company calculates. It's certified under the ISO 14001 standard for environmental management and safety. "Produced using a closed-loop process, TapiSuede minimises environmental impact by avoiding harmful solvents and toxic discharges," says Kenealy.

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

Sustainability is at the core of Tapis' corporate mission. By focusing on cleaner manufacturing processes, recycling, plant-based materials, and weight reduction, the company aims to significantly decrease the carbon footprint of aviation interiors. These efforts are part of a larger vision to support a more sustainable future for the aviation industry and beyond.

FREE READER ENQUIRY SERVICE

To request more details from Tapis, visit **www.magupdate.co.uk/pbji**

NATURAL BEAUTY

Leather can be a sustainability-focused choice for business jets, also offering beauty, comfort, savings and a sense of history

TOWNSEND LEATHER

To achieve true sustainability in any industry, it is essential to become well-informed. There are many different textiles and seat coverings available on the market, but Townsend Leather believes that leather is the most sustainable choice.

"Leather is inherently a green product, as it is made from the waste of the meat industry," says Shawn Czadzeck, Townsend Leather's sustainability coordinator and communication designer. "Usually, what is leftover would be burned, but the leather industry turns this waste into something useful and long-lasting."

BELOVED FOR CENTURIES

Leather has been around almost as long as humans. The skills and craft to produce leather have changed a lot over the years, but the threads of that connection to history and craft remain.

"The intricately woven fibre structure of leather cannot be reproduced in any fabricated product," says Czadzeck. "Its natural durability means it can handle wear and tear and harsh conditions that would destroy mass-produced materials, such as vinyl. Holes or tears in leather can be repaired by skilled technicians and it can last as much as four times longer than fabric coverings."

CONTROL OF PRODUCTION

Townsend Leather is a leather manufacturer, rather than a distributor or reseller. The company harnesses the history of the leather-making region it is homed in, to hand-craft high quality and beautiful leather for seating and footwear.

As the manufacturer, Townsend Leather can make changes in real-time, creating only what is needed, leading to reduced waste and increased efficiency. The firm is AS9100-certified. "This ensures consistent, high-quality products," says Czadzeck.

"High-quality leather lasts longer, and high-quality manufacturing means less waste, less rework and less frustration."

Townsend Leather makes use of modern technology to reduce its consumption of chemicals, water and energy. "Our production process uses water-based finishes and vegetable-based re-tanning agents to create leather that is free of dangerous chromes, is post-consumer recyclable, and is low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs)," says Czadzeck.

Townsend Leather believes there is some misinformation out there about chromes. "Not all chromes are equal and not all chromes are bad," says Czadzeck. "Chrome-free leather is not inherently better for humans or the environment, it's just simply made in a different process."

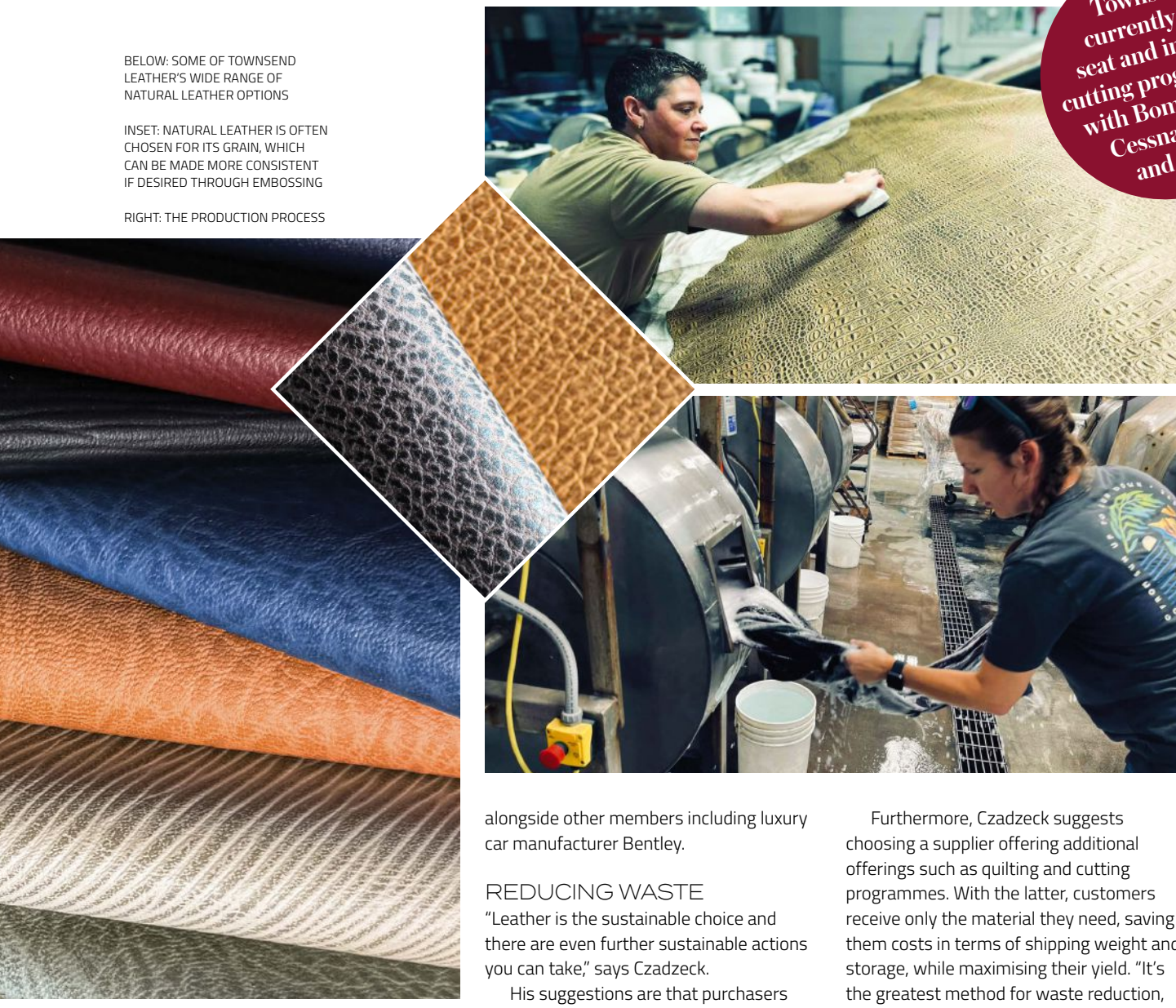
"Chromes are a natural element found in many things," Czadzeck adds. "The natural chromes found in Townsend Leather's production allow for a luxurious feel and high-quality leather, and they are the same chromes that are found in broccoli – safe and natural. Removing broccoli-type chromes from leather does not make it a better leather."

BELOW: SOME OF TOWNSEND LEATHER'S WIDE RANGE OF NATURAL LEATHER OPTIONS

INSET: NATURAL LEATHER IS OFTEN CHOSEN FOR ITS GRAIN, WHICH CAN BE MADE MORE CONSISTENT IF DESIRED THROUGH EMBOSSING

RIGHT: THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

Townsend currently has seat and interior cutting programmes with Bombardier, Cessna, Ipeco and FACC



Townsend Leather's production process is designed to keep the leather as true to its natural form as possible, to allow the natural beauty of the produce to shine. "When you visit our facility, you'll notice that no-one needs to wear a hazmat suit or extreme safety protections, because the process is natural and safe," says Czadzeck. "There's no fear of dangerous chemical spills or toxic exposure."

The organisation Leather Naturally is a great resource for more information about the sustainability of leather, and Townsend Leather is a proud member, alongside other members including luxury car manufacturer Bentley.

REDUCING WASTE

"Leather is the sustainable choice and there are even further sustainable actions you can take," says Czadzeck.

His suggestions are that purchasers should choose an AS9100-certified leather manufacturing company as their supplier, and also consider embossed products.

"Embossing allows for greater waste reduction, increasing yield, and enabling better utilisation of the hide selection process and product mix," explains Czadzeck. "Embossing creates a uniform look with a further reduction of visible defects for patterns or a consistency of grain for grain embossing, which leads to a superior cutting yield and even better wear performance. Choosing embossed products can also reduce order quantity and waste by half."

Furthermore, Czadzeck suggests choosing a supplier offering additional offerings such as quilting and cutting programmes. With the latter, customers receive only the material they need, saving them costs in terms of shipping weight and storage, while maximising their yield. "It's the greatest method for waste reduction, to the point where even the scrap left from our computer-driven machine cutting is utilised for other products, making it a full-cycle green process," says Czadzeck.

When leather has served its purpose and is discarded, it degrades through biological means. "It will only take 50-100 years to decompose in a waste facility, while vinyl will take 1,000 years to break down," says Czadzeck.

FREE READER ENQUIRY SERVICE

To request more details from Townsend Leather, visit **www.magupdate.co.uk/pbji**

ROYAL TREATMENT

The latest Beechcraft King Air interior incorporates customised leather from Perrone Leather – the result of a meticulous collaboration

PERRONE LEATHER

Perrone Leather was acquired by Insperial in 2022 and is a wholly owned part of the group

For over half a century, the Beechcraft King Air has been an icon of business aviation. Central to its luxurious interior is the leather supplied by Perrone Leather, a tannery with a 150-year history. Together, Beechcraft and Perrone Leather have created a cabin experience designed for refinement and functionality. Perrone Leather's legacy began in the mid-19th century in Italy, where the Perrone family mastered the art of tanning. These artisans brought their expertise across the Atlantic, establishing a tannery in the USA that has gone on to be a leading supplier for aviation interiors, working to combine beauty, durability and versatility in its products.

Today, Perrone Leather is part of the Insperial Group, a forward-thinking French company focused on investing in high-quality, innovative materials. The Insperial Group – which includes decorative surface company Adhetec – is growing within the corporate jet sector. Their decorative surface materials can be applied to any rigid structure and also focus on their common goal of a "minimum order quantity of one". Their customised textures for all interior surfaces of the aircraft make a perfect partnership to Perrone's leather products. This blend of tradition and innovation makes Adhetec and Perrone natural partners for the aviation industry, where every detail must balance luxury with practicality.

The Perrone tannery is a modern facility capable of producing leather from raw hides to finished leather. While the tannery has embraced modern technology and global collaborations, its work remains rooted in its original values, including artistry.

ABOVE: THE NOBLE RANGE

BELOW: THE MONARCH RANGE

When it came to designing the King Air interior, Textron Aviation sought materials encapsulating elegance and comfort. Perrone Leather's artisans worked closely with the Beechcraft design team to ensure the leather met their specific demands for the programme, from aesthetic appeal to the ability to withstand rigorous use.

CUSTOM LEATHER

The collaborative project involved a meticulous process; every aspect of the leather – including textures and finishes – was customised to align with Beechcraft's vision for the King Air.

"The interior is a masterclass in thoughtful design and luxury," says Rick Meier, Perrone Leather's head of corporate sales. "Plush seats, upholstered in our finest materials, provide not only superior ergonomic support but also an inviting tactile experience. The leather's natural texture and rich tones create a sense of warmth and sophistication, perfectly complementing the aircraft's modern avionics and sleek finishes."

Each hide is treated to meet stringent aviation standards around flame resistance, durability and long-lasting beauty. "The bespoke detailing reflects the dedication of Perrone Leather's artisans to their craft," explains Meier. "By combining the timeless artistry of Perrone's tanners with the cutting-edge design of Beechcraft, the King Air delivers an extraordinary experience."

"Working with Beechcraft was a pleasure," continues Meier. "Their energy and attention to detail were second to none, and the combination of skillsets between our two companies has produced a truly luxurious aircraft."

For those fortunate enough to fly in the King Air, it's not just about reaching a destination – it's about travelling in style and comfort, supported by a legacy of craftsmanship and innovation that spans continents and generations.

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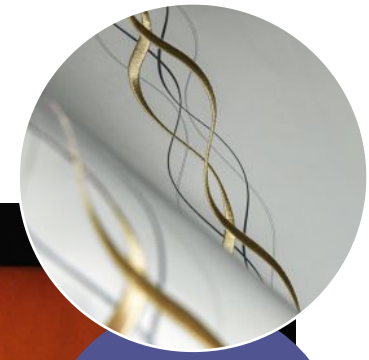

Aeristo offers customisation services through its AeristoCraft division

South German bull hides renowned for their strength and quality are specially selected by Aeristo for its luxury leather products. The company has a special focus on meeting the refined tastes of the private aviation market.

"The natural stiffness of these hides requires skilled, knowledgeable upholstery techniques to shape them into elegant, refined pieces," says Salvador Ortiz, CMF design director at Aeristo. "This high level of quality not only enhances the durability and resilience of the leather but also contributes to its beautiful look and feel."

Aeristo sources hides from trusted suppliers that align with the company's commitment to quality and sustainability. Each hide is thoroughly inspected by Aeristo's team to identify any imperfections, such as colour inconsistencies, veins or natural markings. The team then separates out hides that do not meet the company standards, ensuring only the best materials are used in production.

Aeristo's highly skilled professionals together have decades of experience in leather craftsmanship and luxury interior detailing. Each artisan undergoes specialised hands-on training to work skilfully with the bull hide leather, with its natural stiffness, ensuring every piece meets the exact standards required.

CUSTOM CAPABILITIES

"What truly sets Aeristo apart is our dedication to customisation," believes Ortiz. "We offer everything from bespoke interiors to monogrammed accessories that reflect each client's vision and style."

Clients can tailor their leather goods to exact specifications. The options range from intricate quilting that adds texture and dimension to seats, to precise perforations that enhance airflow and comfort, or laser etching that transforms leather into a canvas for artistic expression.

LEATHER PRINTING

"With our cutting-edge leather printing technology the possibilities for customisation are virtually endless," says Ortiz. "This advanced capability allows us to bring any vision to life. It's an innovation that earned us a win at the International Yacht & Aviation Awards for our Chrysalis project, which combined embroidery with leather printing."

Aeristo prides itself on its commitment to sustainability and ethical practices. "Our leather products hold UL Greenguard Gold certification; a testament to their scientifically tested and verified low chemical emissions," explains Ortiz. "Supported by our ISO 14001-certified environmental management system, we ensure sustainability and compliance at every step. Additionally, each production dye lot undergoes rigorous testing to meet FAA/EASA flammability standards, to guarantee safety and performance."

By prioritising the use of responsibly sourced materials and implementing sustainability-focused production processes, Aeristo strives to minimise its environmental footprint while "upholding the highest standards of integrity and social responsibility, ensuring that luxury doesn't come at the expense of the planet," Ortiz comments.

CREATING EXPERIENCES

Ortiz explains that the company is really in the business of creating experiences: "Each creation, specially crafted and thoughtfully customised, is a testament to our dedication to excellence. Because for us, luxury isn't just a product – it's a journey, and we're here to make it unforgettable."

MAIN: AERISTO'S CUSTOMISATION TECHNIQUES INCLUDE QUILTING AND PERFORATION

INSET RIGHT: EMBROIDERY IS ANOTHER OPTION

INSET LEFT: AERISTO SOURCES ITS LEATHER FROM SOUTH GERMAN BULL HIDES

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Some of our advertisers share their predictions for 2025

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SHAWN CZADZECK, SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR AND COMMUNICATION DESIGNER, TOWNSEND LEATHER

As we see the corporate market continue to grow, we are looking forward to providing innovative materials for innovative designs. Sustainability is a key factor that will only continue to grow in importance and we are already thinking about the next phase of sustainable developments. We think 2025 will be another positive year of growth and development for Tapis and the industry."

LAUREN KENEALY, MARKETING DIRECTOR, TAPIS

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Ocean odyssey

WINCH'S DESIGN FOR PROJECT MASTER MAKES EACH DECK REFLECTIVE OF DIFFERENT DEPTHS OF THE SEA

Icon Yachts' Project Master re-imagines a historical offshore rescue and standby vessel into a luxury vessel for exploration. Originally unveiled in 2021, the boat has been redesigned with a new extended stern section, bringing the total length to 70m.

Winch Design has designed the new interior to offer a social ambiance and adventurous spirit.

Inspired by different levels of the ocean, the design takes guests on a journey to the depths as they descend the decks, the tones and textures shifting. The Owner's Deck at the top is inspired by the sea's calm surface, with soft blue and sandy accents designed to mimic the light on shallow waters. The Wellness Deck has richer hues and softer lighting, intended to evoke cooler, deeper waters. The Main Deck uses darker tones and distinct textures to create an intimate and introspective atmosphere inspired by the mysterious depths.

The design also incorporates subtle references to the vessel's working heritage.

Winch Design's sustainable materials specialist worked to ensure that materials were chosen with sustainability in mind.

OTHER EYE-CATCHING DESIGNS FROM VARIOUS INDUSTRIES...

1 BMW and lifestyle brand Kith collaborated for the limited-edition 2025 BMW XM by Kith. The seats are finished in BMW Individual Merino leather, with an embossed Kith monogram pattern. Details include preset purple interior lighting.

2 British Airways' new First cabin, part of its A380 retrofit plans, has a new seat design. The concept was created by Tangerine in partnership with British Airways; Collins Aerospace is the manufacturer. Each seat is 36.5in wide, with a bed length of 79in.

3 Maserati has marked its 110th anniversary by creating the limited-edition GranTurismo 110 Anniversario, available in two configurations of 55 models each: Blu Inchiostro and Rame Folgore. The Blu Inchiostro interior, pictured, features black Econyl and blue stitching.

CRAFTED WITH PRECISION

Our AeristoCraft Division offers a variety of value-added services to enhance your products with unique, high-quality details. From hand quilting and embroidery to perforations and custom leather printing, we blend traditional craftsmanship with modern techniques to deliver exceptional results. Whether you need intricate designs or custom finishes, AERISTO is here to bring your vision to life with skill and precision.

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